



# Extreme Cold

Extreme cold temperatures are a big danger during winter months in Missouri. Prolonged exposure to the cold can cause frostbite, hypothermia, or in extreme cases death. In fact, excessive cold is one of the leading weather-related causes of death across the country. Infants and the elderly are most susceptible to extreme cold. Freezing temperatures also cause damage to crops and property.

## Cold Related Deaths in Missouri\*

**\* Source: Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS). For more information on cold weather safety, statistics, etc, visit the [DHSS](#) website.**

	Year	97-98	98-99	99-00	00-01	01-02	
	Deaths	7	7	12	19	11	
Year	02-03	03-04	04-05	05-06	06-07	07-08	08-09
Deaths	16	24	19	20	23	23	26

Since the DHSS surveillance program began in 1979, there have been **439** hypothermia related deaths in Missouri.

**Frostbite** occurs when the skin becomes cold enough to actually freeze. A loss of feeling and a white or pale appearance in extremities, such as fingers, toes, ear lobes, or the nose are symptoms of frostbite.

**Hypothermia** (Low Body Temperature) can occur during long periods of exposure when the body temperature drops below 95 degrees F. A person will become disoriented, confused, and shiver uncontrollably, eventually leading to drowsiness and apparent exhaustion. In severe cases, death is possible.